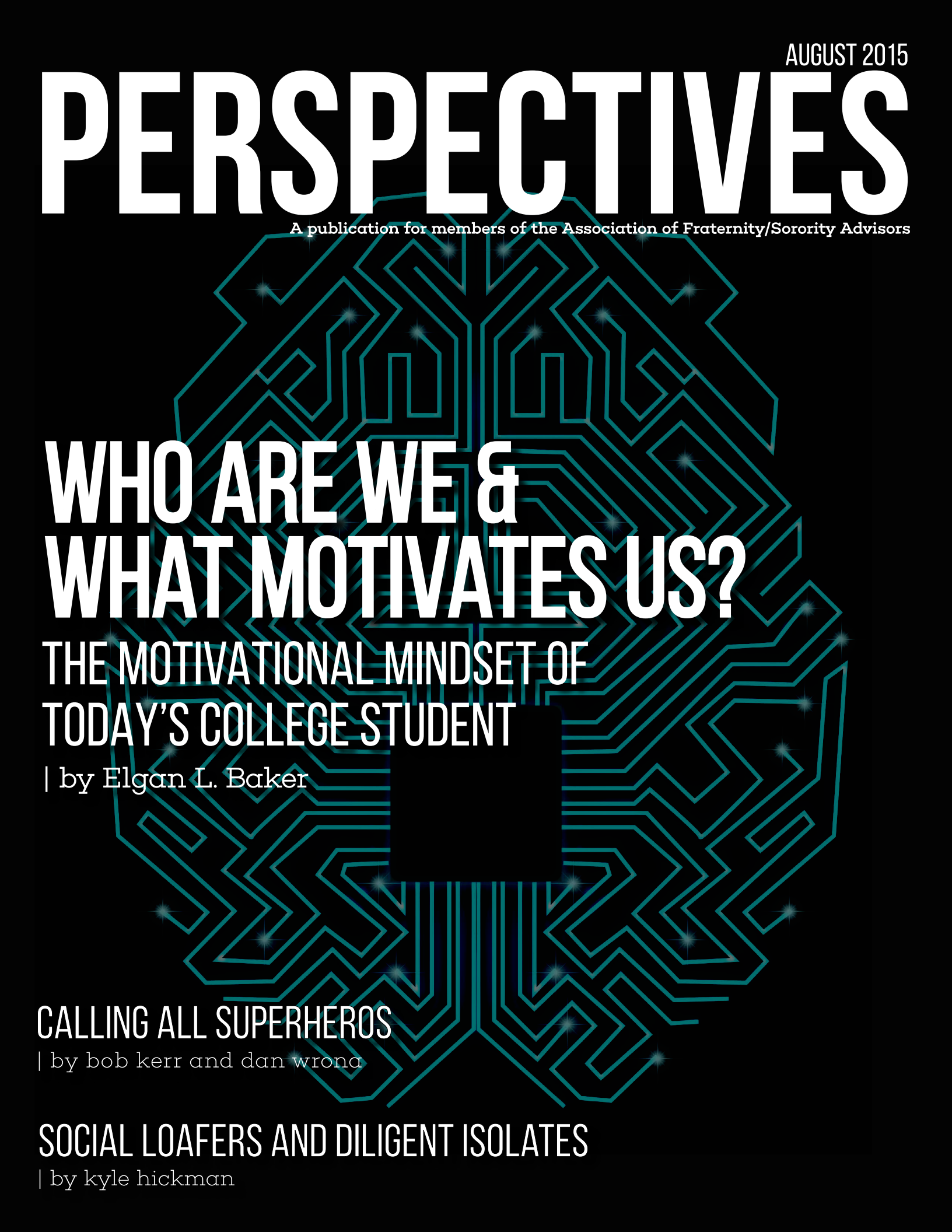
AUGUST 2015

PERSPECTIVES

A publication for members of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors



WHO ARE WE & WHAT MOTIVATES US?

THE MOTIVATIONAL MINDSET OF TODAY'S COLLEGE STUDENT

| by Elgan L. Baker

CALLING ALL SUPERHEROS

| by bob kerr and dan wrona

SOCIAL LOAFERS AND DILIGENT ISOLATES

| by kyle hickman

FIRST 90 DAYS

The First 90 Days program helps new fraternity/sorority professionals acclimate to one of the most unique roles in higher education. Through a series of interactive web conference sessions and special projects, participants build their networks, understand their positions, and learn how to put their expertise into practice.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Motivation is an interesting concept to attempt to explore. It's fluid, there are no boundaries, it's situational, it changes from person to person, it is entirely shaped by our experiences, our beliefs and our values; it drives everything we do. My motivation is, and has always been, to be challenged and to challenge others to be the best professionals working with college students that we can be. For two years I have served on the *Perspectives* editorial board, and it has truly been the most meaningful volunteer role I've had with the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors. When the opportunity to become editor was presented to me, I thought long and hard about it. After all, working with fraternity and sorority members has largely become a volunteer aspect of my life. But if the mission of *Perspectives* is truly about offering a variety of opinions, thoughts and views to start (or add to) a conversation, then count me in! I am grateful for Emilee Danielson-Burke who quickly jumped on board as the assistant editor. Without her support and expertise, the amount of time and work that it takes to create an issue would be overwhelming. Additionally, we have an incredible editorial team who commits to serving you with innovative, thought-provoking pieces.

Motivation typically drives a vision, and Emilee and I were determined that our first issue help steer *Perspectives* back onto the path it had been on under the direction of Heather Matthews Kirk. It's no secret that it's been a tough year for fraternities and sororities which have become the center of nationwide attention on the ills of campus life: sexual assault, rape, hazing, drug use, alcohol abuse and more. Let's be honest – it's been a bit rough over the past 239 years. After all, fraternities and sororities were intended to push against societal norms of the time. However, somewhere along the way, they started making it a bit harder for themselves through negative behavior and actions. Our society has changed a great deal as well, becoming more complex and nuanced with each generation.

Our vision for this issue was to explore motivation from the perspective of drive and decision-making. How are our students conceptualizing the world around them and why? How does the varying motivations of people impact organizational development? And how are we conceptualizing our work with college students and their organizations?

Emilee and I hope that you find this first issue interesting, insightful, and thought-provoking. We challenge you to start a conversation with it, consider different approaches to your work, and reflect on your own personal and professional motivations.

Sincerely,
Annie Carlson Welch

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

When I was asked to write a piece for this edition of *Perspectives*, I thought long and hard about the theme "who are we and what motivates us." I reflected on this theme both personally and professionally as I feel that oftentimes we may not be presented with both being an option. Personally, I am an African American women who is the youngest of three children. I grew up in the inner city of Chicago, IL and was the first in my family to graduate from college. I love to travel and would consider myself a foodie (self-proclaimed). I am motivated by my desire to continuously learn more. I am also motivated by giving of myself to others for their benefit and not my own. Being selfless is what drives me to keep going.

When I thought about who I am professionally and what motivates me, I realized that there are a lot of similarities to who I am personally. What motivates me is the same - to be selfless and to see others grow and flourish. A few of my personal identities also show up professionally in a huge way. While they don't totally define me, they add to my talents in a way that allows me to be aware of how my world view may add or subtract from my professional experiences. I hope that giving you a glimpse of my own individual motivation and identities will spark your interest to explore your own.

Enough about me personally and professionally. How about we take a look at the theme as is relates to our membership in AFA. Let me begin by sharing who we are professionally. As an association, we are a group of committed individuals who work to instill a meaningful fraternity and sorority experience into the lives of undergraduate members. We are dedicated to the growth and development of undergraduates as members of our respective organizations and students on our respective campuses. We are passionate about this work and envision that membership will expose students to opportunities that will expand their knowledge of the world around them which will, in the end, produce a civically engaged and aware adult.

Now, if I go further to answer the question of "what motivates us," here is where I will challenge what has been occurring and offering a lens of what could be more beneficial. Fostering the growth and development of members from a holistic perspective should be at the core of this work. Regardless of the seat that you sit in (within the organization or on a college campus) it would be quite difficult to be successful at our missions and everyday work without the men and women who are a part of it. I will offer a rephrasing of the question to be "what SHOULD our motivation be?" I would argue that it should be to enhance our abilities to be the best professionals in every aspect of our jobs. We should be ready to show up and educate ourselves to be and do better. We should be encouraged to be a part of the solutions to the problems that plagues us. As I stated in my inaugural speech, "…we have a problem and WE need to fix it." The inner drive will be different based on what one personally finds value in. However, what should remain is the drive and passion that will get us to the places we desire. This will take time, intentionality and perseverance in order to achieve.

The Association's role in the aforementioned is to ensure that there are deliverables that members have access to that will help them achieve what they see as important and vital in their professional development; to help members strive to keep motivation as a focal point of their experience. The programs and resources available continue to be enhanced so that membership in AFA can and should be seen as a value-add. As an Association, we remain committed to being a partner in the forefront as we address relevant matters that affect both the higher education community and the fraternal industry. I cannot stress enough that intentionality is key in moving us forward. Our aim should be towards what is best for the end goal of what we hope to achieve - valued members of society who are ready and able to change the world around them. We have what is necessary to get us there. Who will answer the call to action?

Sincerely,
Veronica Hunter Moore

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Perspectives is the official publication of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, Inc. (AFA). Views expressed are those of the individual authors/contributors/advertisers and are not necessarily those of the Association. AFA encourages the submission of articles, essays, ideas and advertisements. Submissions should be directed to the Editor, advertising queries to the staff.

Submission Deadlines:
October 2015: August 1, 2015
December 2015: October 1, 2015
Winter 2016: November 1, 2015

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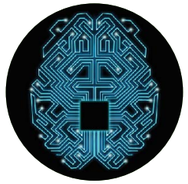
IN THIS ISSUE

CALLING ALL SUPERHEROS
BOB KERR AND DAN WRONA
The lore about the initial founding of fraternities and sororities suggests they primarily came into existence in the form of literary organizations fighting for freedom of thought and expression. Their mission was to correct a problem they saw in society. Culturally-focused fraternities and sororities were founded more recently around a mission of creating equal opportunity and removing barriers for a specific population of students when universities were slow to act. Again, the mission was to right a wrong in the outside world. **Page 6**



THE MOTIVATIONAL MINDSET OF TODAY'S COLLEGE STUDENT
ELGAN L. BAKER, PH.D.
The maturational transition from late adolescence to young adulthood is a significant one governed by the complex interplay of biological and psychosocial dynamics. The unfolding changes in the central nervous system and hormonal balance on the one hand and in autonomy, relationships, and sense of self on the other occur centrally while young men and women are students on our campuses, causing our institutions to become veritable developmental crucibles. We stand as witnesses to this remarkable, sometimes mysterious, and often frustrating journey simultaneously awed by its potential and perplexed by its expression. **Page 10**

SOCIAL LOAFERS AND DILIGENT ISOLATES
KYLE HICKMAN
Involvement in fraternities and sororities through committees can be a positive experience for learning how to work with people of different backgrounds, cultures, learning styles, leadership styles, and motivations. Unfortunately, for many students, small group work tends to feel more frustrating than constructive. However, students learn valuable skills, abilities, and beliefs from these experiences over time, which is why curriculum is often designed utilizing small groups. **Page 16**

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CALLING ALL SUPERHEROES

by Bob Kerr and Dan Wrona

MISGUIDED MISSION

The lore about the initial founding of fraternities and sororities suggests they primarily came into existence in the form of literary organizations fighting for freedom of thought and expression. Their mission was to correct a problem they saw in society. Culturally-focused fraternities and sororities were founded more recently around a mission of creating equal opportunity and removing barriers for a specific population of students when universities were slow to act. Again, the mission was to right a wrong in the outside world.

It is reasonable to claim that the battle for freedom of thought and expression has been won. Students are welcome, and often encouraged, to pursue their own intellectual interests and to explore limitless ideas. Although many problems have yet to be addressed, universities have made significant strides in increasing access, opportunity, and services for a diverse student population.

"Some would argue it is appropriate to close the doors and sink into the shadows of history. Others would suggest the organization has built a capacity for solving problems and should therefore pick a new issue and continue its work."

So what should an organization do when it is so successful in addressing a problem that its original mission becomes irrelevant? What happens when there is no more work to be done? Some would argue it is appropriate to close the doors and sink into the shadows of history. Others would suggest the organization has built a capacity for solving problems and should therefore pick a new issue and continue its work.

Despite largely achieving their goals, fraternal organizations are still here. This rules out the first path, so we should explore whether new issues were adopted. Currently, when explaining their relevance and impact, fraternity and sorority members tend to cite their philanthropic support of a cause, their service to the surrounding community, a roster of prominent leaders, and the cultivation of character among its members. If we consider this pattern of rhetoric, it seems as if fraternities and sororities chose to pursue a new mission of bringing noble ideals such as service, truth, justice, honor, character, leadership, and friendship to places where it is lacking in society.

This presents a problem. Given this mission, the capacity of fraternal organizations to achieve results, and the amount of time that has passed, shouldn't society be further along? If the mission were truly to lift up the community, the community would look different by now. After dedicating decades of effort to the causes they adopted, some of the problems should be solved. Right? In fact, it is difficult to illustrate how there is more justice or character in the world because of fraternal organizations. It is unclear whether the neighborhoods and communities around them are better. Besides tallying how much of one another's money we give to a cause, it is difficult to point to specific impact that effort has created. There is no clear connection between this new mission and the ongoing work of fraternal organizations. The fundamental problem is not the clash between rhetoric and reality but that these noble ideas do not truly reflect members' motivations in the first place.

It is important to differentiate between two interpretations of mission. One sounds pretty, hangs on a wall, and is broadcast to anyone who will listen. The other is an emergent concept that reflects the collective individual desires and motivations of members and is reflected in their priorities, their operations, and their habits. Ideally these match.

Fraternity/sorority members claim to value leadership when in reality a small percentage of members attend a leadership program to gain the necessary skills, and those programs often emphasize chapter management over community leadership. They value service, but for the vast majority of members, it ultimately serves as insulation for their reputation. They value friendship and social interaction but primarily among the "in" crowd. They celebrate principles of character but only in terms of how they carry themselves and treat one another. It has little to do with the role those principles play in society. It seems as if the real, lived mission is to celebrate one another's company and achieve these goals within our ranks; not to advance them in society.

In practice, fraternities and sororities have not dissolved, nor have they shifted to a new mission. Rather, they have celebrated the accomplishment of their original mission and proceeded to enjoy one another's company while congratulating one another on their self-importance. It should be noted fraternities and sororities will give a nod to leadership, service, character, or other ideals through an occasional, sparsely attended event, but these are entirely self-referential activities. What needs to happen for members to embrace social change as the mission of fraternities and sororities once again?

HEROIC ASPIRATIONS

It is time for a real-life superhero to arrive on the scene. Superman didn't sit around and congratulate himself on his good work. His service to society was an end in itself, not a means to satisfy some other need. As American culture continues to be inspired by the superheroes of Marvel & DC comics, it seems to us that there is a unique opportunity for fraternities and sororities to follow their lead:

1. Superheroes have a clear sense of why they are doing what they do: to protect the city where they reside, to save humanity from an unimaginable villain, or to overcome some injustice. The superhero does not limit who they are saving, and who they are saving is not confused about why they need to be saved.

2. Superheroes are good at getting positive results and are uninterested in tooting their own horn. They let the average citizen determine whether praise is warranted for saving the day. They are trusted to answer the call and risk themselves for the greater good. Such sacrifice builds allies and earns the individual a reputation as a mechanism for the general welfare.

3. Superheroes operate from a very intrinsic motivation to fulfill their primary purpose: the crisis is averted, the villain conquered, and innocent people are rescued from impending doom. These deeds lead to very extrinsic outcomes: a thank you, a celebration of achievement, and a headline praising the performance. The only incentive the superhero acknowledges is the fulfillment of their primary purpose: a safer community, a free and just world, and a vanquished villain.

4. Superheroes adapt to the changing environment, and they do things the right way rather than the way they have always been done. Regardless of what has changed for the superhero, no one individual is expendable; no one life is without value. The superhero has an emotional commitment to creating hope and preserving human dignity.

An essential thesis in, The Myth of the Superhero is that, superheroes embody the most positive and inclusive aspects of American culture (Arnaudo, 2013). As mentioned previously, fraternal organizations were founded to correct injustice and inequality. They are made up of a large volume of passionate, highly educated leaders who can be called to action. They have networks and structures to support this cause toward justice. They are uniquely positioned to address the "isms" in society. It seems reasonable that the natural conclusion of the fraternity/sorority influence is building a better world for all people to enjoy, thrive and prosper. Certainly no social structure in collegiate America is better suited to fulfill these characteristics and accept the challenge than the fraternity/sorority community.

EXAMINING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

In The Power of Myth, Joseph Campbell (1988) explains the challenges a superhero faces. Ultimately the individual comes face to face with the enemy and soon realizes that the greatest barriers to be overcome are internal. What if fraternities and sororities were to look in the mirror to overcome the limitations that prevent them from owning their greatest potential?

What does it look like if fraternities and sororities became more nimble and evolutionary? Do they become effective community partners who engage in a process that accepts responsibility as opposed to haggling over the finer points of a citation? What does it look like if they come together to demand our college campuses be more responsive to the critical issues of racism, sexism, sexual assault and the other "isms" that plague campuses and organizations?

When fraternities and sororities acknowledge their own limitations and the prolonged timetable required for effective change, they encounter obstacle and opportunity. The obstacle is the fear that engaging others will cause fraternities and sororities to lose a voice in the conversation of their relevance in the 21st century. The opportunity is to establish partnerships to chart a mutually beneficial path forward. For fraternities and sororities to become superheroes, they must change the conversation and change the level of accountability within their communities first. Fraternities and sororities can then be the leaders in designing and implementing change on campus.

Growing into organizations that do the right thing requires full engagement as opposed to fulfilling some expectation of an awards program. The narrative of the contemporary fraternity/sorority community raises the question of the number of people aligned with the organizational values and purposes of fraternities and sororities who are left sitting on the outside looking in.

If fraternities and sororities recommitted to a mission of social change as stated in this article, then there should be a bounty of allies and supporters beyond the ranks of members and alumni. The reality of potential hazards of fraternity/sorority membership is based on fact and the growing list of "collateral damage" and "fatalities." So let's invite North America to join us in the challenge to provide a safe and relevant experience and embrace the hope of such an alliance.

A contemporary college environment is as different from the founding of fraternity as Iron Man is to Ben Franklin's kite & key. Therefore, fraternities and sororities should re-envision who they are and what they are doing. This new vision will require new and innovative ways of thinking about the problems which plague these organizations. Therefore, the time is ripe for members of fraternities and sororities to don their capes and leap into the fray of the contemporary collegiate world to offer inspiration, transparency and vulnerability as they reshape the fraternity/sorority experience into a superhero worthy of acceptance, reliable to answer the call, and supported by allies who are glad they are there and know they are sincere.

Despite their "secret" methods, it is no secret fraternities and sororities are often seen as the entry way to the corridors of influence, power and financial success. If they can expand the mission from a focus on themselves to a focus on society, like the superheroes described above, they can become servant leaders that drive positive change. They can build safe and successful communities. They have the proven systems to launch and inspire young men and women to attain great shared achievements. It is time to harness the undergraduate experience to seek bold moves for the improvement of host institutions and local communities. It is time for fraternities and sororities to be the "superhero" of society where they can experience the broad support of society because we are "raising all boats" and not just ours.

"When fraternities and sororities acknowledge their own limitations and the prolonged timetable required for effective change, they encounter obstacle and opportunity."

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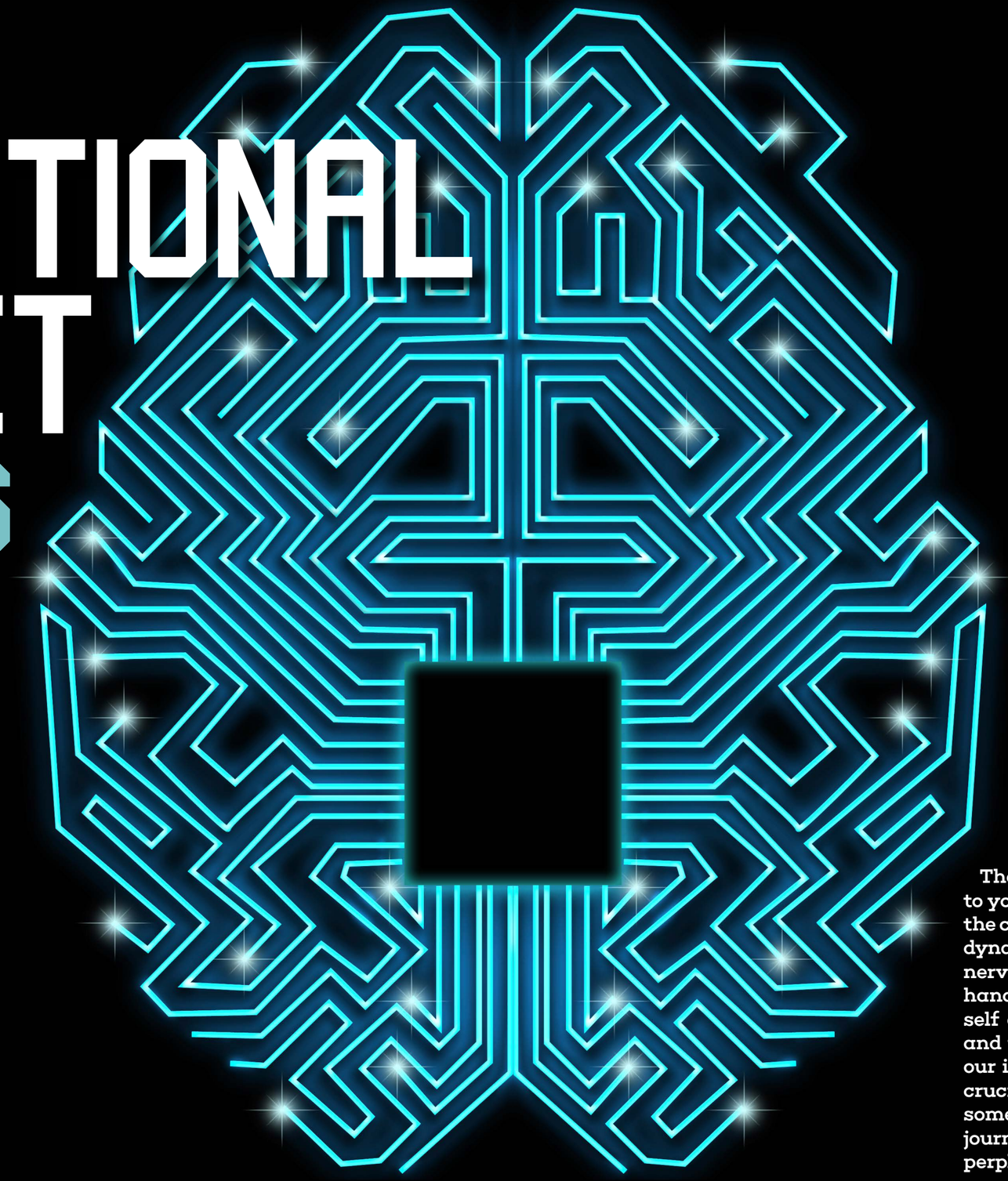
THE MOTIVATIONAL MINDSET OF TODAY'S COLLEGE STUDENT

by Elgan L. Baker, Ph.D.



The maturational transition from late adolescence to young adulthood is a significant one governed by the complex interplay of biological and psychosocial dynamics. The unfolding changes in the central nervous system and hormonal balance on the one hand and in autonomy, relationships, and sense of self on the other occur centrally while young men and women are students on our campuses, causing our institutions to become veritable developmental crucibles. We stand as witnesses to this remarkable, sometimes mysterious, and often frustrating journey simultaneously awed by its potential and perplexed by its expression.

> "THE SOCIAL FORCES WHICH SHAPE THIS JOURNEY AND THE CULTURAL CONTEXT WHICH INFLUENCES ITS EXPRESSION HAVE CHANGED LEADING TO IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES IN HOW THIS DEVELOPMENTAL SHIFT EVOLVES PHENOMENOLOGICALLY AND OPERATIONALLY."

Why do students do what they do? How can we understand their choices and the patterns of their behavior? These questions have seldom seemed more relevant or pressing for the fraternity/sorority community than in recent months, when highly publicized reports of inappropriate, impulsive, and disturbing actions have repeatedly surfaced, creating a public debate and condemnation which has significantly tarnished the reputation of fraternities/sororities and their future at many universities. In the current environment of social media connectivity, each event is magnified in impact influencing responses, opinions, and even policy for beyond the campus where it occurred. The consequences which continue to evolve have been deeply troubling.

The problems of hazing, alcohol abuse, negative social stereotypes, the objectification and mistreatment of women, peer influence, and "group think" are not new nor are they unique to the members of fraternities and sororities. The unmodulated, unreasoned, irresponsible behaviors common to all of these problems share several important dynamics rooted in the developmental forces which shape the motivation of individuals engaged in the maturational transition of this age group. Neuroscience has documented the impact of cortical immaturity in the brains of college students, helping to explain problems in delay of gratification, the anticipation of consequences, and abstract reasoning that lead to failures in moral judgement. The underlying cortical pathways which enable these core competencies are often not fully operational until the mid to late 20s. Our students really cannot always fully "think though" their behaviors.

Hormonal push often creates impulsivity and agitation especially in relation to sexuality and aggression. This biological tension compromises already tenuous capacities for self-control. The need to explore and to test new dimensions of identity that dominates the differentiation and integration of expanding selfhood during these years results in experimentation in all arenas with the augmenting exhilaration of new-found levels of freedom and autonomy. This leads to flirtations with values, political positions and social choices which are unfamiliar to students and which may have unanticipated consequences.

As the sense of self changes, relationships also change and achieve new motivational influence. The individual evaluates this new, emerging self as it is mirrored by the responses of peers. Peer acceptance and thus the dynamics of group influence are now more powerful than at any other developmental stage. The fluidity of identity and the craving for containment and affirmation along with a new openness to the varieties of social and interpersonal intimacy become crucial forces in self-determination and self-expression. This remarkable journey of self-discovery occurs against a backdrop of new and expanding awareness, opportunity and choice. It is simultaneously thrilling and overwhelming for the individual who alternates in energetic rebound between unbridled adventure and anxious retreat and paralysis.

Awareness of these developmental parameters is not new. They have been mapped, explained and investigated by developmental psychologists and other social scientists for more than a century. The data have been essentially consistent and are as descriptive of today's students as they were of their grandparents and parents. The core biological and psychological factors which shape and motivate individuals in their late teens and early 20's are unchanged, and the maturational pathways into adulthood remain remarkably constant. However, the social forces which shape this journey and the cultural context which influences its expression have changed leading to important differences in how this developmental shift evolves phenomenologically and operationally.

Thus "coming of age" looks different and feels different for today's student. Several variables are worth noting.

INCREASE IN NARCISSISM

The longitudinal studies from the University of Michigan (Twenge, 2014) and from Twenge and Campbell (2009) have well-documented the increase in narcissistic traits among today's college students. These findings are broadly known and have been substantially replicated. Today's students are more self-absorbed, entitled, egotistical, selfish, and rude than their predecessors. They seem to be motivated by increased self-interest which can also be viewed as self-protection. This alternative view is important to understanding this phenomenon. Narcissism is classically a defensive veneer which protects against a core sense of vulnerability. Beneath the self-absorption, egotism and entitlement is an essential defect in positive identify and healthy self-esteem. Narcissistic behavior is best understood as an effort to distance from a sense of self as unimportant, inadequate, unvalued, and wounded. The documented increase in narcissism among our students is fundamentally a derailment in the formation of a healthy self which creates significant anguish and diminished robust self-esteem.

DECREASE IN IDEALISM

A number of studies (Brockway, et al, 2012; Brooks, 2013; Baker, 2014) have documented that the current cohort of college students is significantly more cynical then previous generations of students. This has been attributed to a decline in numerous social structures which teach values and inspire idealism such as religion and the nuclear family, loss of positive cultural heroes, an increase in opportunities and options in an expanding and more connected global culture (which may confuse what is acceptable, desirable, or "right"), and increased cultural acceptance of traditionally "anti-social" behaviors. The absence of idealism and of a clear ego-ideal creates confusion in decision making and can impede developmental success.

INCREASE IN ANXIETY

A study recently reported in The American Psychologist (June, 2013) (Sieben, 2011) indicated that anxiety has become the most frequent presenting complaint in college counseling centers. Further investigation reveals that this anxiety centers on a "fear of irrelevance" – a sense of not being important, not being noticed, not having influence, and being abandoned and alone. In essence, this fear of losing meaning seems to be focused in a fashion which is strikingly reminiscent of the "ennui" of the 19th century or Durkheim's notion of "anomie" from the early 20th century. Both of these describe a prevailing sense of disconnectedness, loss of vitality and meaninglessness; phenomenologies which gave rise to existentialism in Europe and transcendentalism in America. One is reminded of the famous quote from the French philosopher, Alphonse Karr, "The more things change, the more they stay the same." This increased anxiety about relevance may help to explain the compulsive use of cell phones and social media which seems' almost addictive for college students and which may create a defensive sense of connection and the illusion of influence and intimacy.

It is also important to mention a range of other cultural changes which impact development and therefore motivational dynamics in contemporary culture: the influence of technology which has created an emphasis on the instant and immediate and a reliance on external stimulation leading to a decrease in patience, delay of gratification, and capacity for self-examination and introspective reverie; an increase in global awareness with an associated loss of uniqueness and security; a general decrease in social civility; an awareness of diminishing resources with a subsequent increase in future uncertainties.

> "THE EFFORT TO TAME INTERNAL IMPULSES IS NOW COMPLICATED BY AN EMPHASIS ON THE EXTERNAL AND IMMEDIATE AND BY THE LOSS OF SOCIAL ANCHORS OF SECURITY AND POSITIVE ROLE MODELS"

So while the internal dynamics which drive development and shape motivation have remained the same, they unfold in a cultural context which creates new tensions and challenges. The effort to tame internal impulses is now complicated by an emphasis on the external and immediate and by the loss of social anchors of security and positive role models. The journey to define an individuated self is hindered by diminished cultural containment, a reduction in authentic and dependable intimacy, and interrupted opportunities for introspection. Increased opportunity has also brought increased uncertainly. Social contingencies have become less clear and less connected to ideals. The anxiety associated with these realities can block or derail maturation, lead to defensive rather than adaptive behavioral solutions, and motivate impulsive and often destructive choices.

Fraternities and sororities can offer a positive and meaningful response to many of these cultural shifts. They can significantly facilitate the developmental success of their members if they return to the purpose for which they were founded and the ideals which their Rituals teach. The philosophical tradition of ancient Greek culture, from which they take their symbols and their names, taught that a successful and meaningful life was found in an emphasis on "purity, beauty, and truth" (Aristotle). Fraternities and sororities can similarly support the successful and healthy maturation of their members by providing a renewed emphasis on inspiring idealism, clear standards and expectations with associated accountability, the secure anchors of meaningful traditions, focused opportunities for self-examination and introspection, attuned and positive role models, peer groups that model and reward values-based choices and authentic communication and intimacy, and space for unencumbered self-discovery and self-expression. Such a course would ensure their relevance and secure their future.

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SOCIAL LOAFERS & DILIGENT ISOLATES

REFRAMING THE SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE

by Kyle Hickman

"THEY JUST DON'T GET IT..."

"WHY WON'T THEY PULL THEIR WEIGHT?"

"IT'S LIKE THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH..."

"I'LL JUST GO AHEAD AND DO IT MYSELF. THIS WAY, I KNOW IT WILL GET DONE."

Involvement in fraternities and sororities through committees can be a positive experience for learning how to work with people of different backgrounds, cultures, learning styles, leadership styles, and motivations. Unfortunately, for many students, small group work tends to feel more frustrating in the moment than constructive. However, students learn valuable skills, abilities, and beliefs from these experiences over time, which is why curriculum is often designed utilizing small groups.

"AS THE MEMBERS BEGIN THEIR WORK, THEY DISCOVER THAT EACH THEIR OWN WAY OF APPROACHING THE GOAL AND THOSE STRATEGIES OFTEN DON'T ALIGN. FRUSTRATION BUILDS WHEN RESULTS ARE NOT REALIZED."

The small group experience typically starts with a general sense of patience for other committee members; optimistic that the group can achieve its intended goal(s). Committee members perceive one another as equally invested and feel excitement for the change they can impact. As the members begin their work, they discover that each their own way of approaching the goal and those strategies often don't align. Frustration builds when results are not realized. This is a fitting emotion considering group members tend to perceive one another as dysfunctional, apathetic, and potentially useless. However, fellow committee members are not evil, nor are they deliberately attempting to sabotage group work (in most cases anyways).

Poorly functioning teams tend to be composed of committee members who perceive one another as intentionally sluggish, leaving the bulk of the work on positional student leaders. Many students enjoy the chance to take the reins of responsibility and put their stamp on their organizations. However, frustration typically destroys any semblance of delegation amongst group members and what follows is a failed sense of trust within the group. As Barr, Dixon, & Gassheimer (2005) illustrated, trust is a crucial component of any student team or group because it facilitates communication, collaboration, and compromise. Inevitably, the go-getters of the group work extremely hard to pick up the slack and end up experiencing significant burnout, which provides little value to the continued health of an organization. Additionally, the continuity of tension can introduce a lingering sense of dislike for others that extends far beyond the group's work. Regardless of the circumstances or the environment, the effects of burnout, disorder amongst the group, or breakdown of responsibilities are not healthy for the organizational dynamic.

This is where fraternity/sorority professionals and various educators can provide a meaningful intervention. You can understand these group dynamics in an effort to be a better resource to chapters. Luckily, the world of social psychology has taken a closer look at this phenomenon and to provide you with a few strategies for identifying the issues and several ways to implement viable solutions.

SOCIAL LOAFERS

A social loafer is a social psychology term used to describe a student or group member who seems to be riding everyone else's coat-tails to victory or completion. Ferrari & Pychyl (2012) refer to social loafing as, "...a reduction in effort within collective settings where individual performance is not identifiable" (p. 13). Pieterse & Thompson (2010) explained, "In educational settings, the term is increasingly used to refer to individuals whose contribution is perceived to be inferior to that of others in the team" (p. 356). Although many of us tend to jump to the conclusion that social loafers are acting out of pure selfishness, there are a variety of reasons why individuals become social loafers. Psychologists tend to agree that it is not some kind of personality defect; while we can be a heavily involved member of one group, we can also be a social loafer in another environment (Hall & Buzwell, 2012). For example, a chapter member can be extremely enthusiastic and motivated to help out with social events but completely disengage during budget meetings. We choose our involvement level based on our interest, our affinity, and our mood.

Social loafing is not necessarily a form of procrastination, but it can assume that role (Ferrari & Pychyl, 2012). If a member of a committee recognizes that they can get away with taking extra time on their projects, it is likely that they will take that liberty. Additionally, social loafing is more likely to occur in settings where individual effort is harder to identify by other group members or outsiders (Pieterse & Thompson, 2010). Hence, the bigger the chapter and the bigger the committees, the better chance a social loafer will be enabled by the culture to take a backseat. When you add in something called the Ringelmann Effect (a phenomenon where all members of a group reduce their individual efforts when working in a group), social loafing can become rampant in a silent fashion. Think of it this way, the Ringelmann Effect acts as a tug-of-war where individuals exert less effort towards the goal(s) because they are surrounded by a large group on the rope. In other words, when others jump on the team with us, we tend to become a little bit lazier with our efforts.

Although it is clear that social loafing occurs, social psychologists have been working to identify the real reasons behind the behavior. The answers are not nearly as black and white as we might think. For example, when there is a communication or language barrier present in a group, students may resort to a form of social loafing (Hall & Buzwell, 2012). In this instance, social loafing is less about withdrawing for deceitful reasons and more about taking themselves away from a troubling and frustrating situation. A second reason might be a student feels that their contributions to the group are inadequate or not valued by the rest of the group, so they withdraw involvement (Pieterse & Thompson, 2010). In this case, while others in the group may view this committee member as incompetent or mentally removed from the group project, the problem may just be a combination of communication and emotions. A third reason for social loafing includes issues with competency or ability of a committee member. In this case, the rest of the group may exclude that committee member from the proceedings altogether (Pieterse & Thompson, 2010).

Other times, the presence of social loafing is due to structural parameters within the organization. If it is routine for communication to break down as it travels across layers of hierarchy, it could be very difficult for a group member to accomplish their responsibilities in a reasonable fashion (Barr et al., 2005). Consider a chapter where directions for projects are given through online or physical documents only, as opposed to regular verbal communication where questions could be addressed and intent clarified. The chapter's leadership may simply be assuming that committees are handling their duties efficiently when in reality the lack of effective communication could be preventing the goal from being achieved. Additionally, if there is little alignment between the input of members and the eventual outcomes of the projects, it becomes easier for members to blend in seamlessly with the rest of the group (Pieterse & Thompson, 2010).

DILIGENT ISOLATES

Although the literature is full of references to social loafing, very little research covers what Pieterse & Thompson (2010) call the diligent isolate or what Barr et al. (2005) calls the lone wolf. These are group members who work independently of the group, taking on more of the responsibility to get the job done. Routinely, these individuals are seen as valued members of an organization, small group, or project team. However, their propensity to avoid group processes, work on their own, and dismiss other people's contributions can make them a negative addition to the culture of an organization (Pieterse & Thompson, 2010). Very often, these people do not know how to delegate and, as a result, break down trust. Therefore, while they are sometimes needed in group projects, they often end up destroying the type of cohesion they are initially attempting to fix. As responsible advisors of fraternities and sororities, it is important to recognize the diligent isolate's existence alongside social loafers as individuals who disrupt group processes.

SOLUTIONS FOR GROUP NORMING

As Hall and Buzwell (2012) illustrated, "free-riding (or social loafing) can be detrimental to the learning outcomes intended for group work" (p. 40). Despite the variety of conditions that breed social loafers and diligent isolates, there are a number of solutions that make group work more efficient. Helping students learn how to navigate group dynamics will define how they interact in groups throughout their personal and professional careers. Here are some possible approaches to addressing social loafing and diligent isolates:

1. In general, self-selected teams or groups tend to perform better and limit social loafing (Drake, Goldsmith, & Strachan, 2006). Therefore, allow students the freedom to choose their committee involvement

SOLUTIONS FOR GROUP NORMING

1. IN GENERAL, SELF-SELECTED TEAMS OR GROUPS TEND TO PERFORM BETTER & LIMIT SOCIAL LOAFING
2. A HEIGHTENED SENSE OF GROUP COMPATIBILITY RESULTS IN MORE SATISFACTION FROM GROUP MEMBERS & A REDUCED CHANCE OF SOCIAL LOAFING.
3. GROUP UNITY CAN BE REINFORCED & STRENGTHENED BY SPENDING TIME BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMON IDENTITY
4. BUILDING A SYSTEM OF PEER ASSESSMENT CAN BE VERY EFFECTIVE
5. STUDENT COMMITTEES SHOULD BE NO LARGER THAN FIVE MEMBERS
6. CREATE NEW COMMITTEES TO UTILIZE EVERYONE'S TALENTS
7. ELIMINATE APATHY BY EQUIPPING YOUR STUDENT LEADERS WITH THE TOOLS NECESSARY TO MANAGE & LEAD OTHERS
8. ESTABLISH A CULTURE OF REWARDS THAT HIGHLIGHT INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

or membership in group projects. Practicing too much oversight in designating roles and positions tends to create more problems than originally intended.

2. A heightened sense of group compatibility results in more satisfaction from group members and a reduced chance of social loafing (Chen & Lawson, 1996). When putting together group projects or assembling committees, be more strategic about who is a part of the group. Be intentional about personality types being gathered together and put someone in the managerial role who can delegate effectively. Place individuals in positions of leadership who will trust the members of the group to get the job done.

3. Group unity can be reinforced and strengthened by spending time building a sense of common identity (Hall & Buzwell, 2012). This may be a brief process or something that requires much more effort and troubleshooting. The more energy spent building mutual respect between students and advisors, means that there is a better chance of eliminating social loafers or diligent isolates. This could come in the form of a semi-annual retreat with officers and committees to clarify mutual expectations. Ensure that each member understands the expectations offered by the organization and the expectations set forth for one another.

4. If harnessed properly, building a system of peer assessment can be very effective. Such a system gives students a chance to periodically evaluate the performance of their fellow committee members. This process can be monitored by another student leader or a professional/educator. If social loafing is not addressed early on with peer evaluations, there may be no stopping the problem (Hall & Buzwell, 2012; Pieterse & Thompson, 2010).

5. Student committees should be no larger than five members (Pieterse & Thompson, 2010). This seems to be the perfect number to keep students involved, engaged, and participating in group activities. Any more on the team and social loafing may become rampant.

6. To expand on the previous tip, consider creating new committees to utilize everyone's talents. There needs to be a successful management hierarchy in place to ensure that all objectives are carefully assessed and reviewed properly. Knowing when to utilize a well-timed ad-hoc committee can go a long way towards organizational efficiency.

7. Eliminating apathy is all about managing an organization that does not create spaces for social loafing and diligent isolation to occur. Therefore, if you equip your student leaders with the tools necessary to manage and lead others, they should be more effective at eliminating both social loafers and diligent isolates. This may require a start-of-the-semester training, a one-on-one conversation with the students, or the introduction of a book chock-full of tips and techniques that can be read by the student and utilized later in multiple contexts. Apathy can be reduced significantly by adjusting the communication structure, incentive system, and leadership model within an organization.

8. It is critical to establish a culture of rewards that highlight individual responsibilities and accomplishments. If a chapter officer makes it a point to recognize a chapter member publicly during each meeting, it sends a message to the group that their actions (or inaction) are held accountable. That will go a long way to keeping members engaged.

In one way or another, social loafers and diligent isolates will always exist; the world of organizational management is far from perfect. Fortunately, if harnessed properly, these eight useful strategies can combat the rise of social loafers and diligent isolates in fraternities and sororities (or any organization for that matter). To make the biggest impact possible, it requires student leaders with the proper tools to strengthen lines of communication, enable and amplify positive behaviors, and put together the best working teams possible. If even a few of those aforementioned strategies are utilized, chapters have a great opportunity to see immediate returns on their investment.

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QUESTION & ANSWER

JOY HELSEL & BETSY SARNESO

Joy Helsel is the Director of Fraternity & Sorority Life/Special Publications at California University of PA. She is a proud member of Sigma Kappa Sorority, and currently serves as the National Philanthropy & Service Director for the Sigma Tau Gamma Fraternity.

Betsy Sarneso is the Assistant Director of the Center for Student Life, Greek Life and Student Engagement at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is a proud Phi Mu, grateful wife and mother to a beautiful two year old little girl, hopeful optimist, dog lover and compulsive list maker.

On a Friday afternoon in late June I sat down on a phone call with two long time fraternity/sorority professionals. Collectively Joy Helsel and Betsy Sarneso have over 40 years of fraternity and sorority advising experience. In a field where many professionals choose to move up or move out after a relatively short time in the profession, we wanted to talk to some of our most experienced advisors to hear their thoughts on the current state of fraternity and sorority life, where we've been, where we need to go, and why they have spent their professional careers working with fraternity and sorority members.

"Don't give up! Something will happen – someone will have an "ah-ha" moment and get it – and then you know you are having an impact on somebody. It won't happen every day, or even when you need it to, but it does happen, and it is worth putting in the time and having the patience, being realistic, about meeting them where they are."

Joy Helsel

"I feel very centered in "do what you love, love what you do." I think we try to make our profession unique in terms of the highs and lows you experience, but I expect in any field you are going to have good days, bad days, medium days, and be expected to manage them appropriately. .Our days revolve around the evolution of the student – how are they developing."

Betsy Sarneso

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BEGIN A CAREER IN FRATERNITY/SORORITY ADVISING?

Joy: I joined my sorority in the spring of 1979 during a time in fraternity/sorority history when there was a lot of "big time" hazing still going on. There were no real professionals who were assigned full time to fraternities and sororities…no one who was "waking up thinking about Greeks" as my supervisor at the time described it. I did not enjoy the hazing process, my dad encouraged me to quit but I knew if I quit I wouldn't be able to change anything about the joining process.

I think it really started there – I knew I wanted to make a change in my organization. I didn't feel like I was one of the "cool kids" so I didn't get to make as many changes as I wanted to. It wasn't until I graduated, got a [graduate assistant] position and then continued to a job that I saw the effect I could have.

Betsy: My undergraduate experience exposed me to this thing called student affairs – I didn't know about it. At the time it wasn't a career field known to me. I was involved in a few things other than my sorority, but it was the sorority and being a leader on Panhellenic that got me thinking about what it would be like to do this for a job after college. It made me aware it was even a possibility.

I was attending college with the intent of being a special education teacher. My student teaching experience my senior year was good, not great, and I started thinking about other options, - what did I love? If my student teaching experience had been great maybe my path would be different but it was the things I loved – fraternity and sorority life, orientation, working one-on-one with students – which showed me I could make that a career. I'm not sure I considered it this way at that time but this was my calling.

WHAT WAS HARD FOR YOU IN THE EARLY YEARS? HOW WAS IT DIFFERENT FOR YOU THAN FOR NEW PROFESSIONALS NOW?

Joy: (Laughs) Well, this is the only job I have ever had! I started as a Graduate Assistant in 1987 but that meant something different then than it does now. There was no full time professional person that I reported to or that had created or maintained any kind of program that we would recognize as normal now. A [program] simply didn't exist so I had to create it and build it from nothing. I found mentors – Terry Apollonia, past AFA president - at conferences and just put one foot in front of the other. If we didn't have a resource we had to create it. Things didn't exist to be shared the way they are now. The challenge early on was building a program out of nothing. Once I got that off the ground in the first years it was working to maintain that. Other challenges were feeling like you had to "start over" each time there was a new policy or trend – FIPG, etc. – reforming programs, reeducating students and later alumni.

After I completed my Master's degree I was hired full time in 1997. I had the opportunity to attend the fraternal law conference and that conference at that time was the defining moment for me. I was going to make this my career or I was going to run away and teach kindergarten! I knew there was a lot to do, and I could be in the position to do it; it was a real reality check. I could be a part of making the kind of changes I wanted to make as an undergraduate.

Betsy: My first job was as the Greek Coordinator at a school in the Midwest in 1994 – very different environment than I had known coming from the East Coast. In that position I did a lot of recreating – I don't recall if it was because I was directed to or it needed to be done. I struggled there with the students' schedule - we were on quarters versus traditional semesters. It was a positive experience over all for me, just not a good fit for location. It helped me to formulate some ideas about how this career would fit for me.

OUR FIELD HAS A HIGH TURNOVER RATE WITH PEOPLE MOVING AROUND AND/OR LEAVING THE FIELD. WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR NEW PROFESSIONALS THINKING ABOUT CAREER LONGEVITY?

Joy: For me the interaction with students is a big motivating factor – my job has changed to include other things – but I have consistently advised the Greeks. I have always agreed to take on other things as long as my responsibilities included the Greeks. I think a lot of younger professionals expect too much of themselves. If there is a big problem, or something doesn't go well, they think it is the only thing that reflects on the work they are doing. The work we do is cyclical - you think things are going great and then you have a setback. Sometimes you see it coming and sometimes it blindsides you, and you feel like you aren't making a difference, and you should give up. Don't give up! Something will happen – someone will have an "ah-ha" moment and get it – and then you know you are having an impact on somebody. It won't happen every day, or even when you need it to, but it does happen, and it is worth putting in the time and having the patience, being realistic, about meeting them where they are.

Betsy: I feel like my path has been deliberate; intentional. I want to be in this field and my career choices have reflected that. I do believe it is a positive experience, and I am able to make a difference. I know we make changes. I know our students are learning. If a student wants to be involved, that's why I am here. Over the four jobs I have had there has been some diversity of responsibility depending on the job, but I have always advised fraternities and sororities.

The field is bigger than what you may do or experience in your first years. Some of the experiences you can only have once you gain some experience of your own. In my current role I have the opportunity to supervise and mentor graduate students. It has been an enormously valuable opportunity for me because I am in the position to bring new people into the field and watch them grow through their professional experiences.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR NEW PROFESSIONALS?

Joy: Frankness is important – it's kind of where I am. So many new professionals think "I'm going to change the world." Well, you're not. And it's okay – you're not the one whose system is going to be perfect and that's okay and it doesn't mean that you aren't making a difference.

If you are thinking of leaving the field – ask yourself why? Is it because things aren't perfect? If so, that's not a good enough reason! You can't get discouraged if you aren't perfect; you are making a difference. You have to pick your battles. You have to make your progress realistically. I am so committed to what I do professionally that it's part of my identity now.

Betsy: I feel very centered in "do what you love, love what you do." I think we try to make our profession unique in terms of the highs and lows you experience, but I expect in any field you are going to have good days, bad days, medium days, and be expected to manage them appropriately. As an advisor you have to be able to manage that up and down. Our days revolve around the evolution of the student – how are they developing. The problem is not always exclusively a fraternity/sorority problem – your work will be impacted by things that happen in the fraternity/sorority world and things that happen around it (Title IX for example). Mentors are important, if you don't have one, find one. It's never too late to learn or grow.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR LONGEVITY IN THE FIELD? WHAT DRIVES YOUR PASSION?

Joy: As Betsy said – do what you love, love what you do. I'm not done yet – I still have goals and plans. I know I won't ever have the perfect community, but there is always work to be done and things you can improve on and move forward. I can look back over 26 years and see the changes we have made and the things that have improved – the hazing culture has changed, the involvement in the community has grown. This is the first year in 17 years that I haven't had a yearbook to work on in the summer, and I am learning to find balance. You can always learn.

Betsy: I certainly do love what I do, and I work hard at it. Don't make your job your life – have a life outside of work so you have the ability to refuel and feed your soul. It helps a great deal.

There were days early on when it was all about work. It is important to be able to put in that productive day, week, month, but also know that for you to remain good at your job there needs to be other parts of your life in play.

Every day we get to make a difference - no matter how small or large it is. That "making a difference" is different for everyone. I am able to say in the end there is value added to this experience and I am making a difference.

NEW PROFESSIONALS' PERSPECTIVES

In an ever-evolving landscape of challenging student development work, we were curious to learn more about the identity of some of our new professionals working with fraternities and sororities. In addition to what brought them to the field, we wanted to know more about their visions, their hopes, their fears and their challenge for what lies ahead.

BRITTANY BOOTH

COORDINATOR OF VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT, ALPHA KAPPA LAMBDA

"Why?" is a question I have asked myself many times over the last two years.

"Why am I doing this?"

After a particularly bad Monday morning when I get to watch a student have that "ah-ha!" moment, I think "why would I ever choose to do anything else?"

Why did I choose fraternity and sorority life?

Why have I chosen this path for myself?

Why do I think that I can make a difference?

The simplest, most direct answer is love.

I am a firm believer that you should strive to do all things with love. Whether it be your work or your Sunday afternoon brunch plans - do it because you love it. I also believe that you can never have too much love in your life.

I first fell in love with my organization, my community, and this movement five summers ago. I was an eager, idealistic, and naive first year student attending the Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute (UIFI), and I had absolutely no idea what to expect. I had been initiated into my organization four months earlier and, by all accounts, had no idea what it meant to be in a fraternity or sorority.

Upon leaving UIFI, like many graduates of the institute, I was completely sold on fraternity. I learned that fraternity and the value of fraternity stretched far beyond the four years spent as an undergraduate. I learned that perseverance, faith, and a good friend can help you through the most difficult times as a member. Above all, I learned what it meant to fight for something that was bigger than myself. UIFI is one of the pivotal experiences that set me on the path to being a fraternity and sorority life professional because of the love it showed me for myself, my organization, and those around me. It is a big reason why I continue to do and love this work.

Simply, I want to work in this field because I wholeheartedly believe in the fraternal experience. I believe that having membership in a fraternity or sorority can be one of the most rewarding and influential pieces of someone's life; I absolutely love that aspect of what I do. I work in this field because when I get to work with a student and watch them grow into a great fraternity man or sorority woman, I am inspired. Having the opportunity to go to work every day and make an impact on just one person, on just one fraternity man or sorority woman, is what motivates me.

One of the most inspirational experiences as a graduate student was having the opportunity to work with the Greek Conduct Board. It was far outside my comfort zone and was going to be a challenge for me professionally. It was that experience that further solidified my love and motivation for this work. I spent day in and day out working with chapters who truly needed help and assistance. I did not find it exhausting having these conversations. On the contrary, it was an opportunity to help a chapter and its members become better and develop. Working with the conduct board challenged me and pushed me to be a better professional, and it allowed my love for this experience to grow in a different way. The hard days and the difficult conversations allowed me to see that I truly loved helping people even when— and perhaps especially when— it was not easy.

It has been a particularly tough year for fraternity/sorority professionals, and at times it can feel like many have lost sight of our mission. We have all read the articles and watched the videos, but at the end of the day, I still believe in this experience. We can do better; we must do better. As a new professional, it's incredibly daunting. There are professionals with more experience and influence than I that are stumped on how to move forward from where we are. To be honest, that is scary. There have been times that I have questioned myself and my love for this movement.

We, the advisors, the students, the entire infrastructure dedicated to this movement, are slowly killing ourselves. I believe that we need to take a step backward and look at the big picture of fraternity and sorority life. Looking at the mountain in front of us, it feels at times like we are only focused on the next step. What would happen if collectively we took a step back and looked at the mountain itself? To be effective, I believe it would truly have to be all parties coming together to find the best way to the top.. What would it look like if we collectively worked toward a solution?

I truly wish I knew the answer. As I'm preparing to start my career, I expect I will be asking myself that question a lot. I know that my love and passion for the fraternal movement will be challenged, called out, and tested at every turn. But part of the beauty of that is that it also allows one to reaffirm and strengthen the love they have.

A quote from Henry David Thoreau has been on my desk for the last year: "Be not simply good - be good for something." As a graduate student and now as a new professional, it is these words that motivated me. These words remind me that I am not just doing this work for myself but for all of those that will come after me and for those who came before me. It is a daily reminder that the fraternal experience is bigger than any one of us. These words are a call of responsibility to strive to be better than I was, than we were, yesterday. They are also a call to remember my purpose and the love I have for the fraternal experience.

Brittany Booth is the Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement for Alpha Kappa Lambda Fraternity. She recently completed her master's degree in Higher Education at Saint Louis University. Brittany is proud member of Kappa Alpha Theta!

KEITH D. GARCIA

COORDINATOR, OFFICE FOR FRATERNITY & SORORITY LIFE, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The ugly truth is that entering the field of Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) at a time like this leaves much to be desired. I recall speaking with a mentor at the NASPA Annual Conference who mentioned her senior student affairs colleagues' challenges with recruiting candidates passionate about the functional area to their institutions. FSL has taken a beating over the past couple of months. Daily we hear about the challenges facing our communities on major news media outlets. Perceptions are shaped instantly and calls are made for the dissolution of our "antiquated" community. It breaks my heart to see our field so beleaguered, but these are not the end times for FSL. From the eyes of a bright-eyed new professional, this is my take on who we are, what we must do, and where it has the potential to take us.

My engagement in FSL started with membership in La Unidad Latina, Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Inc. (LUL). With a vision for affecting change within the community, much of my work within LUL has centered on a vision of support, access, and engagement. All of those aspects of my fraternal experience are wrapped in an environment rich with diversity. Having the ability to experience fraternity in such a way lends itself to what I believe is an innovative approach to FSL.

First, we need to own that we have issues as a community. All too often it appears the FSL community, attempts to skirt the ugliness of what is taking place. It is said that the first step in recovery is to accept that you have a problem. Part of our problem is that our mission is not as timeless as we thought it was. The concepts of friendship, scholarship, leadership, and service are great but they are not exclusive to FSL. Maybe it is time to give these pillars a major overhaul. Personally, I would love to see social action become the primary focus of FSL. These pillars, in their current state, are not guiding our work as fraternity/sorority professionals.

I can see it now: the seasoned professional reading this, saying, "What the heck does this kid know?" I get it. I'm a younger professional, but that does not make my observation any less astute. We are not guided by these principles; we are guided by crisis response. Ask any fraternity/sorority professional what their day-to-day activities include and the central theme will revolve around avoiding disaster. "I'm hosting a program on responsible leadership" translates to "I'm hosting a program in hopes of these students avoiding the bad decisions we've been plagued with in the past." Maybe if the intentional nature of our work changed we could have a great impact on both the communities we serve and those they interact with. And this is what brings me into this field.

When I was the Regional Director for LUL in the New York Metro Region, I entered the position with a desire to see our community excel. There was a ton of potential given the fact that New York City had more Hermanos (brothers) in the area than any other region in the country. With the help of dedicated Hermanos, both undergraduate and alumni, we reimagined what our region and fraternity could be. We piloted things that we believed would leave an imprint on the national fraternity. We made mistakes and learned from them. We did all of this while clinging to our fraternity's historic nature of being engaged in social action. This process is not a stretch for the FSL community on campus.

How can fraternities and sororities address their issues while evolving to a place where their relevance is not questioned? My take is that we can move towards a platform that speaks to support, access, and engagement. Fraternity/sorority communities can provide a level of support that is unmatched in many other arenas. I would not have graduated from my undergraduate institution if it were not for the support of my fraternity. With LUL, I found purpose not only in my success but the success of the students we worked with through our national service initiative. How are we utilizing FSL to support students along the pipeline of education?

Access is a word that can have a variety of definitions as a result of different contexts. In FSL it is often discussed in two ways: they deny membership access to their communities through exclusivity, and they provide resource access to members that would otherwise be unattainable. What if instead of maintaining that dichotomy, they used their access to better those both within and beyond the bounds of FSL? How can they help peers who are not members see the value of their communities and possibly inspire a desire to join?

Lastly, engagement is a huge part of FSL. We know that students who are immersed in activities on campus are retained at higher levels, persist through college and graduate at a stronger rate. How can we broaden engagement to include making our students better global citizens? With all that is going on in the world today, we have the opportunity to affect positive change. Instead of complicating the process of adjudicating sexual assault on campuses, maybe we take the lead on matters of awareness and education? What about using the immense privilege that exists in FSL to highlight the importance of dialogue surrounding race and the movement of #BlackLivesMatter? At the end of the day, engagement beyond the fraternity/sorority bubble will be the greatest benefit for both students and campus communities.

I firmly believe in the concept of fraternity. My passion for this work stems from my involvement in my fraternity and the affect it has had on my life. More importantly, the role I have played in the lives of others because of fraternity inspired my desire to enter fraternity/sorority life as a profession. Fraternities and sororities can be a force to be reckoned with as a community, but they have to take a look inside at who they really are and what they must do if they are ever going to achieve their greatest potential.

Keith D. Garcia is a recent graduate of the Educational Administration Student Affairs program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and is a Fraternity/Sorority Life staff member at the University of Minnesota. He is a member of and national volunteer for La Unidad Latina, Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, Inc. serving as a representative to the National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations.

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